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ABSTRACT

Approved by the American Psychological Association (APA), these guidelines are designed to help high school psychology teachers make decisions relating to ethical problems in their classrooms. The guidelines cover three areas: the use of animals in school science behavior projects, the use of human participants in research or demonstrations conducted by high school students, and ethical guidelines for teachers. Respect for animal life, knowledge of humane laws, and proper care and feeding of animals are stressed. Further, the use of invertebrates rather than vertebrates, and observation rather than experimental manipulation should be encouraged. Students are reminded that in order to use human participants, they must be supervised by a qualified school authority, that agreement must be obtained from all participants, that participants should not be exposed to mental or physical risks beyond the ordinary risks of daily life, and that anonymity of information should be preserved. Similar guidelines for teachers consider complex ethical issues resulting from the introduction of sensitive topics in class discussion and the questioning of personal and social values. The teacher's responsibility in the areas of personal and professional behavior and their obligations to students are emphasized. (KC)

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ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING PSYCHOLOGY AT THE SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL.

HIGH SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY TEACHER:

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HIGH SCHOOL
PSYCHOLOGY TEACHER

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Editor's note: The following pages of High School Psychology Teacher follow a different format than usual. This entire issue is comprised of three sets of ethical guidelines for teaching psychology at the secondary school level. They have been approved as official policy by the Council of Representatives of the American Psychological Association (APA). Because of the potential impact psychology can have on students, APA has a continuing interest in promoting the highest standards of teaching and is concerned about any problems that may arise during the educational process.

Readers are strongly encouraged to express to the editor particular classroom incidents that illustrate the principles involved in ethical problems and the application of those principles to actual cases. A selection of these classroom incidents may be published in a future issue of the newsletter. Prior permission will be obtained and anonymity will be assured.

GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF ANIMALS IN SCHOOL SCIENCE BEHAVIOR PROJECTS[1]

Committee on Precautions and Standards in Animal Experimentation[2]

With today's emphasis on the advancement of science, more and more intermediate and secondary students are participating in classroom science projects which involve experiments with live animals. Live animals should be used in classroom situations for their educational value in achieving instructional objectives and not as research contributing new knowledge to human health and welfare, as would be expected from a research facility.

1. In the selection of science behavior projects, students should be strongly urged to select small animals that are easy to maintain or invertebrates as subjects for evaluation.

2. All experiments must be preplanned and conducted in such a manner that respect for basic animal life and all humane considerations are fully understood and carried out by the student.

3. Each student undertaking a science project using animals must have a qualified supervisor. Such a supervisor shall be a person who has had training and experience in the proper care of small and laboratory-type animals. The supervisor must assume the primary responsibility for all conditions of the experiment. The following requirements must be fulfilled:

(a) The student shall research and study the appropriate literature concerning previous work done in the student's chosen area.

(b) A written preliminary outline of the student's plan of action and anticipated outcome for the science project shall be submitted and be available for evaluation. Such an outline should include the specific purpose of the research and a justification of the methodology.

4. Legislation and guidelines for specific care and handling of all animals do exist. Students, teachers, and supervisors must be cognizant of such legislation and guidelines. Copies of appropriate humane laws are available by contacting the local humane organization and the American Humane Association, P. O. Box 1266, Denver, Colorado 80201. Each state also has specific animal health regulations which must be considered. Copies of animal health regulations are obtainable from the state veterinarian or state public health office.

5. No student shall undertake an experiment which includes the use of drugs, surgical procedures, noxious or painful stimuli such as electric shock, extreme temperature, starvation, malnutrition, ionizing radiation, etc., except under extremely close and rigorous supervision of a researcher qualified in the specific area of study.

6. Students using animals must insure for the proper housing, food, water, exercise, cleanliness, and gentle handling of such animals at all times. Special arrangements must be made for care during weekend, holiday, and vacation periods. The comfort of each animal, by meeting its basic daily needs, shall be of prime concern. Caution must be taken to avoid the animals being teased or harmed by other students.

7. When the research project has been completed and the student does not wish to maintain the animal(s) as a pet, arrangements shall be made for proper disposition by the supervisor. Under no circumstances should the student be allowed to provide "experimental" euthanasia.

8. Specifications for the detailed treatment of animals are available from the American Psychological Association, Office of Scientific Affairs, 1200 Seventeenth Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20036.

9. A copy of these Guidelines shall be posted conspicuously wherever animals are kept and projects carried out.

NOTE: A general guideline for animal experimentation in an educational setting like the high school is that invertebrates should be encouraged over vertebrates as subjects for study and that, for vertebrate studies, naturalistic observation should be encouraged over experimental manipulation. Extreme experimental procedures (such as surgery, shock, etc.), if undertaken at all, should be carried out only under strict supervision and in a research setting.

GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH OR DEMONSTRATIONS CONDUCTED BY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS[3]

Committee on Psychology in the Secondary Schools[4]

High school students planning to use human participants in research or demonstrations are strongly urged to become thoroughly acquainted with the American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles in the Conduct of Research with Human Participants.[5] The potential problems of such research may not be immediately evident to those doing research for the first time. Among specific guidelines for the use of human participants in research or demonstrations conducted by high school students are the following:

1. All research and demonstrations involving human participants should be prop-

erly supervised by a qualified school authority. The supervisor should assume the primary responsibility for all conditions of the experiment. The following requirements should be fulfilled:

(a) The supervisor should be familiar with the relevant literature concerning previous work done in the student's chosen area. When possible, the student should also review and summarize appropriate reading material.

(b) A written preliminary outline of the student's plan of study, to include a statement of possible outcomes of the project and a description of how the student plans to accomplish the objective of the study, should be submitted and be available for evaluation by relevant school authorities. Such an outline should include the general and specific purposes of the research or demonstration and a justification of the methods to be employed.

2. Participants should not be exposed to physical or mental risk. High school students should not undertake procedures involving human participants that are likely to harm the participants. Participants should not be subjected to any risks greater than the ordinary risks of daily life. To assure compliance with this guideline, high schools are encouraged to form student-faculty committees that examine all research or demonstration proposals from the point of view of the APA's Ethical Principles in the Conduct of Research with Human Participants,[5] to assure that risks to not exceed the ordinary risks of daily life. Such committees might be constituted at the classroom level, across classes, at the department level, or schoolwide.

3. Agreement to participate should be obtained from all participants. The individual conducting the project should obtain each participant's agreement to participate, based on a full understanding of what that agreement implies. Obtaining agreement involves providing a full explanation of the research or demonstration procedures with special emphasis on aspects of the project likely to affect willingness to participate. All questions asked by any prospective participant should be answered directly, honestly, and completely. Participants who are too young or for other reasons cannot comprehend the project should be excluded, or proxy consent should be obtained from parents or guardians; this principle also applies to the siblings of the person conducting the project. A clear and fair agreement that clarifies the responsibilities of both should exist between the individual conducting the project and the participant. All promises and commitments included in that agreement should be honored by the person conducting the project. Such a formal agreement may not be necessary in some studies of public behavior, but in such studies it is especially crucial that participants' rights not be infringed.

4. Participants should have the right to refuse to participate. Potential research participants have the right to refuse to participate and the right to withdraw from participation, for cause, at any time during the course of the research or demonstration procedures. The person conducting the project should explain this right to all potential participants prior to the commencement of the research or demonstration procedures. The person conducting the project should also provide opportunity for withdrawal with minimum discomfort during participation, particularly if a group activity is involved.

Protection of this right requires special vigilance when the individual conducting the project is in a position of influence over the participant. For example, students in lower grades than the person conducting the project should not be pressured into participating and should not be publicly identified if they decline to participate in a particular experiment, survey, or demonstration. Under no circumstances should potential participants be exposed to ridicule, force, or excessive group pressure.

5. The student should deal with possible undesirable consequences for participants. The supervisor should discuss with the student possible undesirable consequences of the project that should result in at least a temporary halt in the project. In the event that unanticipated undesirable consequences are detected by the individual conducting the project, he or she should halt the project if it is still in progress and notify the supervisor or other appropriate school authorities.

6. The anonymity of the information gathered should be preserved. In certain projects, a participant may not wish the person conducting the project to disclose the results of the study in a way that individually identifies that participant. Only with the participant's full agreement can the person conducting the project disclose identifiable information about that participant to any other individual. A plan for protecting the anonymity of the information gathered should be a part of the procedure for obtaining initial agreement to participate. The person conducting the project should make every effort to maintain anonymity, but participants should be made aware that in some cases it may be difficult or impossible to maintain full anonymity about all of the information obtained. Formal agreement to participate may not be necessary in some studies of behavior, but preservation of anonymity is as important in the observation of public behavior as it is in other research or demonstrations. In public situations, information should not be collected in such a way that individuals are identifiable.

It is suggested that persons conducting projects encourage potential participants to read these guidelines. To ensure a careful reading and adequate understanding of these guidelines, persons conducting projects may wish participants to sign a statement such as that below.

> I have read the Guidelines for the Use of Human Participants in Research or Demonstrations Conducted by High School Students. I have received satisfactory answers to my questions concerning this research or demonstration. I understand that every effort will be made to protect the anonymity of my responses although it cannot be guaranteed. I understand that I may withdraw from this research or demonstration without penalty at any time.

Name _____ Signature _____ Date _____

ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR HIGH SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY TEACHERS[6]
Committee on Psychology in the Secondary Schools[7]

It is generally recognized that teaching psychology in the high school is a challenging task, and that experiments, demonstrations, discussions, and other activities can be a valuable part of a psychology course. Complex ethical issues may be involved in experiments with human participants, experiments with animal subjects, self-disclosure in class discussions or activities, and questioning of personal or social values. This document presents some guidelines for high school psychology teachers. Most of the guidelines are adapted from the American Psychological Association and National Education Association codes of ethics.

1. Moral, ethical, and legal standards of behavior for any psychology teacher are a personal matter to the same degree as they are for any other citizen, except as these may compromise the fulfillment of their professional responsibilities, or reduce the trust in teaching of psychology held by the general public. In addition, teachers can influence others, and therefore, also should be aware of the possible impact on the public and ethical behavior that they exhibit in the presence of those whom they influence.

2. To the extent that high school psychology teachers have not had the training and experience of professional psychologists specializing in psychological testing, diagnosis, therapy, or research, they should avoid representing themselves to students, parents, or colleagues as experts in these areas. The ethics of teaching psychology require high school teachers constantly to strive for objectivity, to search for truth, and to distinguish between scientific principles and generalizations on the one hand, and personal opinions on the other.

3. High school psychology teachers have simultaneous obligations to five constituencies: their student, the parents, the school, the community, and the discipline of psychology. Although high school teachers of psychology should respond appropriately to these five constituencies, they must, nevertheless, always keep the best interest of their students in mind. For that reason, high school psychology teachers should not force students to act against their wills, except as necessary to meet curriculum requirements, or implement effective classroom learning.

4. In planning a course, high school psychology teachers should evaluate the ethical acceptablility of all aspects of the course, taking these guidelines into account. If the appraisal suggests a deviation from any guideline, teachers should seek ethical advice from an expert or an experienced colleague.

5. High school psychology teachers are responsible for the establishment and maintenance of acceptable ethical practice in a course. They are also responsible for the ethical behavior of co-teachers, student teachers, aides, and students involved in the course. These others, however, incur parallel ethical obligations. Department heads, principals, other administrators, school boards, and parents are also responsible for ethical practices in schools.

6. A significant part of a high school psychology course is consideration of the ethical aspects of human and animal experimentation. High school psychology teachers should raise questions about the ethics of research and treatment methods, applications of research results, and research or demonstrations performed by or on students. It should be made clear that many ethical questions have no simple answers and that thoughtful, well-informed, and well-intentioned individuals often reach different conclusions on ethical issues. Students should be encouraged to exercise ethical judgment and take stands on the ethics of actions that involve them; teachers should respect these stands, especially when the opinions differ from their own.

7. The study of psychology includes value-laden areas of human behavior. At the beginning of a course and throughout it, high school psychology teachers should emphasize that viewpoints on sensitive topics will be presented in addition to those that individual students already hold. Indeed, teachers have a responsibility to help students distinguish among facts, fancies, and values. Teachers should not avoid controversial issues simply because students hold opinions contrary to well-accepted scientific generalizations.

8. High school psychology teachers should protect students from undue psychological discomfort, harm, and danger in a course; students should not be subjected to any risks greater than the ordinary risks of daily life. Procedures that involve a significant possibility of harm to human participants should <u>not</u> be used (this prohibition, however, is not intended to exclude the use of potentially effective laboratory tools such as mild electric shock from a demonstrably safe source). Experiments, discussions, demonstrations, and activities involving personally sensitive topics such as drug use or sexuality may produce undesirable effects. The high school psychology teacher should be aware of the diverse backgrounds of the students, and, when dealing with sensitive topics, treat the material objectively and present it in a manner that takes feelings into account. Teachers should explore

alternative possibilities of reaching their intended educational objective and should seek advice on the ethical acceptability of any questionable activities. Students should not be permitted to employ procedures with human participants in areas in which their high school psychology teacher is not adequately trained to offer appropriate supervision. High school teachers of psychology are encouraged to seek the advice and supervision of a qualified scientist in these instances. In all cases, high school psychology teachers should be guided by APA's Ethical Standards of Psychologists[8] and Ethical Principles in the Conduct of Research with Human Participants.[5]

9. It is, of course, important that the quality of relationships between students and the significant persons and social systems in their lives (e.g., family, school, church, and community) not be placed unduly and unnecessarily at risk. High school psychology teachers should not disclose information nor use experiments, demonstrations, discussions, or other activities that involve significant risk to those relationships, without very careful evaluation. For example, relationships could be damaged by the use of deception, including inaccurate or incomplete disclosure of information. On the other hand, even though a unit on the psychology of prejudice might create family problems for a child with a racially bigoted parent, the topic should not be avoided on such grounds alone.

10. Before undertaking an experiment, demonstration, discussion, or other activity, high school psychology teachers should attempt to anticipate undesirable consequences and take precautions to prevent them. In the event that an activity results in unanticipated undesirable consequences for a student or other participant, teachers should be sensitive to and make efforts to correct these consequences, including long-term aftereffects, where relevant. When the needs of a student require it, teachers should refer the student to an appropriate professional such as the school psychologist or guidance counselor.

11. Certain events should lead to the discontinuation of an experiment, demonstration, discussion, or other activity. If high school psychology teachers become aware that undue physical or psychological discomfort, harm, or danger to a participant is occurring, or if a participant feels harmed by an activity or challenges its ethical acceptability, teachers should halt the activity immediately and take steps to relieve any harm or to correct any misunderstanding that has occurred. The activity should be resumed or repeated only if there is good reason to believe that the conditions that resulted in the earlier problem no longer exist. Teachers are urged to seek advice, from the participants as well as from colleagues or experts, before resuming or repeating the activity.

12. Students should be free to decline to participate, or to discontinue participation in an experiment, demonstration, discussion, or other activity that might involve undue and severe risk to them. Providing alternative means of fulfilling course requirements is one way of satisfying this guideline. Where possible, students who decline to participate in an activity should not be publicly identified, nor should they be exposed to group pressure or ridicule.

13. Allowing students meaningful freedom to decline to participate in an experiment, demonstration, discussion, or other activity implies that high school psychology teachers have informed students of the features of the activity that might reasonably be expected to influence their decision to participate. It also implies that teachers have answered any questions students may have about the activity. Considerations of class time or educational impact may sometimes prompt teachers not to inform students fully about an activity in advance; if the planned activity is new (without a history of success and safety in similar situations), teachers should seek advice on its ethical acceptability from colleagues and/or students.

14. At the end of a class session involving an experiment or demonstration using student participants, high school psychology teachers should provide the participants (and any observers) with a debriefing that includes a discussion of students' reactions to the activity. A debriefing that fully clarifies the nature of the activity should take place at the end of each experiment or demonstration.

15. High school psychology teachers cannot promise legal confidentiality to students, nor can students promise it to one another. Before an experiment, demonstration, discussion, or other activity, potential participants should be informed whether information that is obtained about or disclosed by them will be anonymous. Information that cannot or will not be anonymous should be kept private to the extent consistent with student learning. Circumstances under which such information might be disclosed to others, especially persons outside the psychology class, should be the subject of a clear agreement arrived at in advance by the students and the teacher.

16. In situations where there might be a conflict between high school psychology teachers' personal interests and the students' interests--for example, when a teacher is conducting research for outside credit or publication and using the students as subjects--teachers are under special obligation to seek advice on the ethical acceptability of planned activities.

17. In student experiments or demonstrations using animals as subjects, high school psychology teachers should, as a minimum, ensure that students follow APA's Guidelines for the Use of Animals in School Science Behavior Projects.[1] In general, animals used in school experiments or demonstrations should be invertebrates rather than vertebrates, and naturalistic observation of vertebrates is preferable to experimentation on them. Invasive procedures, electric shock, and high stress should be avoided except under those unusual circumstances where a student of extraordinary promise has obtained competent, documented, and sustained supervision. In such cases, the student's experiment or demonstration should conform to APA's Principles for the Care and Use of Animals.[9]

18. In student experiments or demonstrations using human participants, high school psychology teachers should ensure that students follow APA's Guidelines for the Use of Human Participants in Research or Demonstrations Conducted by High School Students.[3] In general, students should obtain agreement to participate from all participants, deal with possible undesirable consequences for participants, and preserve the anonymity of the information gathered. They should not use procedures that expose participants to undue physical or psychological risk. Further, the statements in Guideline #8 on experiments or demonstrations conducted by teachers also apply to experiments or demonstrations conducted by students.

Footnotes

[1]These Guidelines were approved by the Board of Scientific Affairs, the Education and Training Board, the Board of Directors, and the Council of Representatives of the APA.

[2]Members of the Committee when these Guidelines were developed were William Bruce Halpern, John Davenport, Daniel Lehrman, Richard Walk, and Seymour Levine (Chair).

[3]These Guidelines were approved by the Education and Training Board, the Board of Scientific Affairs, the Board of Directors, and the Council of Representatives of the APA. They are a condensed version of APA's official guidelines for the use of human participants in research and represent a distillation of the customary procedures of responsible, experienced research psychologists. Adherence to these prin-

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ciples will provide protection not only to the participants in research or demonstration projects conducted by high school students, but also to the individuals undertaking or responsible for such research or demonstrations, both students and teachers.

[4]Members of the Committee when these Guidelines were developed were John K. Bare (ex officio), Evelyn Frye, Frank B. W. Hawkinshire, Mary Margaret Moffett, Maxine Warnath, and Michael Wertheimer (Chair). The Committee thanks F. Barbara Orlans for pointing out the need for these Guidelines and for drafting five of the basic principles that appear in these Guidelines.

[5]Ethical Principles in the Conduct of Research with Human Participants, is available for $4 from APA.

[6]These Guidelines were approved by the Education and Training Board, the Board of Directors, and the Council of Representatives of the APA.

[7]Members of the Committee when these Guidelines were developed were John K. Bare (ex officio), Evelyn Frye, Frank B. W. Hawkinshire, Linda Meador, Mary Margaret Moffett, Paul Munford, Maxine Warnath, and Michael Wertheimer (Chair).

[8]Single copies of Ethical Standards of Psychologists are available free of charge f APA.

[9]Principles for the Care and Use of Animals is available free of charge from the Office of Scientific Affairs, APA.

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